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An Account of the Andaman Islands,
and their Inhabitants, by Capt. Archibald
Blair

Communicated by Alexander Dalrymple Esq.^{FRS}

Read April 4. 1799.

It is an unparalleled case in the history
of the World, that an extensive Group of
Islands, situated so centrally, near Countries
civilized from the most remote antiquity;
should have remained so long disregarded,
as the Andaman Islands have been; and
that their
~~last~~ Inhabitants have continued so
little removed from the rudest state of
human existence.

Should the following unadorned. +

Narrative

Narrative be deemed an acceptable communication to the Royal Society, it will afford me the highest gratification

The earliest notice of the Andamans, and the other islands in the Bay of Bengal, appears in the Chart of Ptolomy; with the word Anthropophagorum annexed to several of the names⁺. This illusive information has probably been obtained from the Indians; for I have been informed, that there is ^{a similar} ~~an~~ ~~accounting~~ account of the Andamans, to be found in some of the ancient Hindoo Writers, and there exists a Tradition to the same effect.

+ This is noticed
in Rennell's
Memoir

It

+ I had not an
opportunity of
examining these
Annals

It is alleged, that in the Annals of Goa⁺ it appears, that two portuguese Ships, bound to a settlement on the coast of Bracan, with african Slaves, were lost on their passage thither; about two centuries ago. This accident has been thought, to have first peopled the Andamans; But the present language of those Islands, having no affinity to any of the languages, of the eastern coast of Africa, makes me conclude, that their original inhabitation, must have taken place at an earlier period

The Andamans were little known
until

until the year 1770, when Capt Pritchie, by orders from the Bengal Government, took a running survey of the whole of the east, and part of the west Coasts. Several Navigators, both before, and since that period, had visited the Islands; but, as they were generally annoyed by the Natives, they were prevented from making useful discoveries.

In the year 1788, Lord Cornwallis ordered a particular Survey to be made of the Andaman Islands, and did me the honor to intrust me with the Execution.

What

What has been termed the Great Underman,
 extends from the latitude of $13^{\circ} 33' - N^{\circ}$ to
 $11^{\circ} 20' - N^{\circ}$, being an extent of 130 nautical
 miles. The greatest breadth is 16, and in
 some places it ~~do~~^{does} not exceed 6 miles.

This supposed island, we found to be separated
 by two navigable channels; and it is
 possible there may be other small
 passages, not yet discovered. By astronomical
 observations, I made the centre of the
 great island, in longitude, $92^{\circ} 40' -$ East
 of Greenwich

The islands in general are mountainous.
 The highest part is towards the north
 end; which, from its appearance, has been
 termed

termed the Saddle, and may be seen, in clear weather, at the distance of twenty leagues. There is also a peak near the south end, which is so high, as to be seen, at the distance of fourteen leagues.

The surface of the Islands is extremely uneven, being much intersected by deep Ravines; and the Valleys and ^{Plains} ~~Plains~~ are but of small extent.

X With the exception of the Cliffs and a few Precipices, the Islands are covered with Trees. Rejoining the shores, ^{they are,} ~~it is~~ almost impenetrable, by a great variety of

of prickly Underwood, closely interwoven,
and in some places by Swamps, which
are flooded by the tide, and thickly covered
with Mangrove Trees. On gaining a
little ascent from the shores, the Woods
become less impervious

The best ^{timber} ~~timber~~ trees, were the following.
The Ceres. This timber is of a chocolate ^{color},
and close texture, and is used in India
for making Oil Mills. One of these trees
furnished the Keel, Stern, Sternpost, ^{and} all the
outward plank of a Boat of twenty tons,
besides several Tables. The wild Almond
tree; the trunks of which are from fifty
to eighty feet, in length; and six or seven
in

in circumference: the tree is altogether, resembling the Elm. The quality of the timber, in the young trees, is soft and spongy; that in old ones, of a superior texture, and answered very well for the planks of either Boats or Vessels. The Poon; this is of good quality for Masts. The Alexandrian Laurel; which answers well for the crooked timber of Ships; being light, yet extremely tough: it is known to the Malays by the name of Panaga.

The Red ^{Sanders} ~~Sanders~~; which, besides affording a Red Die, is much prized in China, and answers well for

Furniture

Furniture. Besides those, the Forrests abound with the Oil Tree; the Dammer; ~~the silk cotton~~; the Keem, resembling the Ash; and well known in India, for the salubrity of its shade⁺; the Silk Cotton tree; the Ebony; and many others, the names of which I could not learn

⁺ People with Fevers, are directed by the Physicians of India to sleep under the Keem Tree

We found several sorts of Fruit; those known were, Mangos, small but of good flavor. Mangosteens, a little acid. The Melora, the bread fruit of the Niobars; the Natives only use the ^{Kernels} ~~seeds~~, and the tender roots occasionally. ⁺ Nutmegs

⁺ The roots which are used by the Natives, shoot off from the lower part of the trunk, and before they reach the ground, are tender and well tasted

Nutmegs, of three sorts, which might probably be brought to perfection by culture; the Nuts were of an acrid taste, the Mace less unpleasant, but the Leaves had a very pleasant and highly aromatic flavor. And the Brek or Beetle Nut. Besides those enumerated, there were several others, unknown to any of the Settlement.

The Keepa was also found, which makes an incomparable Thatch, and there is a great variety of Canes and Mattans. That very useful Plant the Bamboo, was also found, which

which, wrought into Mats, formed the
 walls and roofs of clean comfortable
 Huts. This piece of practical knowledge
 I gained by a visit to Sank Seilon;
 and fortunately having one Sepoy
 who understood the manufacture, the
 little Settlement was very soon lodged;
 and an Hospital was constructed of
 the same fabric, which received
 100 of Admiral Cornwallis's Seamen

The shores of the islands, almost
 without exception, are environed by
 coral Reefs, which abound with

a variety of Shellfish, and there are
 excellent Oysters in many parts. The
 Reefs extend, in some places, a considerable
 distance into the sea; and there are
 others detached, which it requires
 vigilance in the Navigator to avoid.

The Bays and Inlets abound
 with a variety of Fish, which were
 caught by Hooks, as well as Nets.
 Some of His Majesty's Ships procure
 an abundant Supply with their
 Seans

No ~~other~~ Quadrupeds were found
 on

on the Islands, except Hogs and Rats; The
 foot of another Animal was traced, near
 the north part of the island; but the
 animal itself was never seen, by any of
 our people: from the appearance of the
 print, it was judged to have been that of a
 porcupine

Several sorts of Snakes were found
 on the islands, some of which were
 venomous, but we were so fortunate as
 to suffer little injury from them. The
 most troublesome creatures, on our first
 settling, were Centipedes, of a large size,
 some as much as ten inches long; the
 Bite

Bite of which caused very acute pain, a swelling of the head, and a fever for a few days

There ~~are~~^{is} a variety of wild Pigeons and Doves, some with very beautiful plumage. Parroquets, Woodpeckers, King-Fishers, and some few others, were seen in the Woods. The rocks on the coasts abound with Sea-Fowl. Soon after our arrival we had a colony of Crows

On several parts of the coasts there are Caves frequented by the small Swallows which build the Exile ~~birds~~ Nests. Under the idea, that it may not be unacceptable,

J

I shall recite what I observed concerning the substance, of which the Nests are composed. On a near approach to the coast, the Caves appear, which are inhabited by innumerable Flocks of the small Swallow, which makes the Edible Birds Nest, so much valued by the Chinese, as a delicate and restorative Food. The principal Cave is situated at the south point of Strait Island; which is rocky, but not exceeding the height of forty feet. The entrance of the Cave, which is washed by the sea, is an irregular aperture of about six feet wide, and the same height. On advancing thirty

or

or forty feet, the height diminishes to four feet, and the breadth increases to twenty.

Here it is rather dark, and very warm; and the top and sides of the Cave are covered with the Nests; an astonishing number of the Birds twittering, and on the wing, are whisking past the ears and eyes; this, contrasted with the melancholy noise of the waves resounding through the gloomy cavern, had a very uncommon and interesting effect.

The Birds are probably induced to choose such situations, from the caves being

being inaccessible, either to Snakes or Quadrupeds, and possibly defensible against Birds of Prey

The Nests in general, are in form of the quarter of a sphere, of two and a half inches diameter; of ~~this shape~~ ^{this shape}, one of the sections ~~being~~ ^{is} firmly fixed to the rock, the other section leaves the nest open above. The substance of the nests is glutinous; those most in estimation are white and ~~semi-~~ ^{semi-}transparent

Various conjectures have been formed, as to the ~~of which~~ ^{of which} substance, the nests are composed. In smaller and more accessible caves,

J

I have observed a Mucilage or gelatinous
Substance exuding from the rock,
 moistened by the constant exhalation
 from the sea, which washes the
 lower parts of those Caves. This Mucilage,
 on being washed and dried, had both
 the texture, color, and taste of the
 Birds Nests. But, what removed all
my doubts of this Mucilage being the
 substance of which the Nests are
 composed, was observing the Birds, in
 immense numbers, resorting to a
 Cave very productive of the Mucilage,
 in

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in the month of January, which is
the season, ^{in which} the Birds build their Nests

I have ~~perceived~~ ^{observed} that this Mucilage,
in process of time, hardens, and assumes
an appearance of stone. It is in
taste somewhat salt and bitter; but,
by washing it in fresh water, and
afterwards drying it, as has been
already ~~observed~~ ^{mentioned}, it had both the
taste and texture of the Birds Nests

The Climate of the Andamans
is peculiarly equable, as will appear
by

by an abstract of a meteorological
 Diary annexed; and, though there was
 an unusual fall of Rain, both Europeans
 and Asiatics enjoyed remarkably
 good health at Old Harbour, on the
 S E part of the Great Andaman.

In order to convey the best idea
 I can of the Natives, I shall relate
 what occurred at the principal
 interviews we had with them, in
 the order they occurred, from my
 Journal

On Decr. 29. 1788 being at
 anchor

anchor within Interview Island (on the western side of the great Andaman) we saw several of the Natives, who resembled Africans, both in color and in having woolly Hair. They were perfectly naked, and extremely timid. I could bring about no further intercourse with them, than inducing them to accept some Looking Glasses, Knives, and a few Nails. And, though I took the precaution of sending those presents, by Africans, almost naked like themselves, yet they would not receive them from their hands, but
made

made signs for them to be put down on the Beach, when they accepted them.

The following morning, a single Native came to the place, where the ^{Presents} ~~Presents~~ had been put down, and held a Stone, of twenty or thirty pounds weight, over his head, for not less than an hour. This extraordinary action, was probably intended to signify a disinclination to further intercourse.

A few days after this, I came unexpectedly pretty near a considerable number of Men, Women and Children, who immediately ^{ran} ~~went~~ into the Woods, apparently

apparently much alarmed

Proceeding to the southward, a few
 Canoes came off; ~~and~~ after some hesitation,
 they came close under ^{our} ~~the~~ stern, and
 accepted some Knives and Lookingglases,
 about which they seemed very indifferent.
 On ^{our} producing Bottles, they expressed
 a great desire for them, and made
 signs that they wanted them to shave
 with; one of them very aptly ~~putting~~ ^{put}
 his hand to his head, which was only
 shaved ~~off~~ ^{on} one side, and when a Bottle
 was held up, he ~~opened~~ ^{opened} his hands to
 receive it, and called out Hee Hee, which
 probably

probably might signify, give or throw, in their language. They were peaceable, but appeared extremely suspicious; and would not venture on board, even for bottles. Like those we had seen at Interview Island, they were perfectly naked, their features, color, and hair, resembling those of Africans.

At Port Campbell (on the SW part of the great Anderson) we suffered many unprovoked insults from the natives, and frequently ^{quitted} ~~quitted~~ the shore, to avoid conflicts with them; but all my pacific ^{endeavours} ~~intentions~~ would not avail. On Jan^r. 15th.
being

being ~~leaving~~ the day after our arrival, I
 sent Lieut. Wales to ~~examine~~ ^{examine} the interior
 of the harbour; who, on his return, in-
 formed me, that a canoe, with two
 men, had followed the Boat, and frequently
 pointed to the upper part of the harbour,
 where he was going. The Boat got
 aground on a shoal, when the Natives
 immediately gave a Shout. They took a
 convenient distance, strung their
 Bows with composure, and shot their
 arrows at the Stern Sheets. A piece was
 fired at them, with small shot, the
 major part of which appeared to have
 taken

taken effect. ^{The two men,} ~~They~~ on this, ~~both~~ jumped out
 of the canoe, using it with great dexterity
 as a movable Breast Work, pushing
 it towards the Boat, and at the same
 time shooting their arrows pretty
 quick. A few Ball Cartridges were fired
 while pushing off the Boat. As the
 Natives were intirely the aggressors,
 it is to be hoped the small shot ~~would~~
 will cause them some trouble, and deter them
 from ^{making} unprovoked attacks. ^{in future.} ~~and future~~
~~will also serve to make us watchful,~~
 This conflict was not
~~without having been~~ attended with any
 disagreeable consequence, but ~~it~~ served
 to make us watchful ~~in future.~~ afterwards ^{on}

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On the 16.th we had a visit from 17 of the
Natives, in two pretty large Canoes. By
a little ~~persuasion~~^{persuasion} they came on board.
Their heads ~~being~~^{were} ornamented with Wreaths
of long grass, and white Leaves; which
were probably intended as Emblems of
Friendship. They were highly pleased
with some Knives and Bottles, which on
being presented, they generally put into
their mouths; apparently as asking
whether they might eat them; or whether
they might consider them as
their own property. On presenting
an old man (who appeared of superior
consideration) a Hand-Bill, with which
he

he appeared highly delighted, he thrust it
 into his mouth, and as soon as the nod
 of ~~assent~~ ^{assent} was given, he jumped overboard
 and swam off with it to his canoe. This
 party readily parted with their Bows
 and Arrows, for the Articles which
 were given them. They were fanci-
 -fully Tattooed, some of their skins ha-
 -ving the appearance of coarse black
~~Corduroy~~ ^{Corduroy}. Some had their heads dressed in
 small tresses, ^{and} ~~dressed~~ with a kind of red
 pomatum, which seemed to be a composi-
 -tion of Grease and Red Ochre. Others
 had their heads shaved, which ~~it~~ ^{appeared}

^{to be}
~~was~~ peculiar to the west coast. This Party,
 after having been on board about an
 hour, went away perfectly satisfied,
 frequently viewing their ^{presents} ~~Presents~~, as
 they paddled towards the shore.

While watering, the Party was suddenly
 attacked by the Natives, with their Bows
 and Arrows, and a ⁺ Naich was wounded,
 which obliged the Party to defend them-
 selves with Musquetry; on one of the
 Natives being wounded they all immediately
 disappeared. This little skirmish had
 one good effect; for in the course of the
 two succeeding days, the water of both
 vessels

Cornwall of Sepoy

vessels was completed without interruption

Examining a small island in
this vicinity I met two canoes, and
gave the Natives who were in them
some Bottles, with which they ~~were~~
^{seemed} ~~seemingly~~ pleased. One of the Natives
suddenly jumped out of his canoe, ran
within twenty yards of my Boat,
and shot all his Arrows at us, which
luckily did no hurt, though most of
them struck the Boat. To punish
this piece of treachery, I took ~~the canoe~~
^{came it} the canoe, on board, and set her on fire
the following morning with a wind,
which

which would drive it, to the place,
where we had been insulted

Having given strict orders, that all
conflicts with the Natives should be as
much as possible avoided, Lieut. Wales
was obliged to quit a rock on which
he was taking some Angles. While
occupied on this duty, a number of
the Natives assembled, and fortunately,
some were perceived ^{swimming} ~~swimming~~ and
diving alternately towards the rock,
with their Bows and Arrows; he only
had time to push off the Boat, when
a shower of Arrows was shot after
him

him. On his return on board, I perceived about two or three hundred of the Natives, all armed, near the same place. With an intention to ^{conciliate} ~~reconcile~~ them, if possible. I went to the same rock, with some ^{presents} ~~Presents~~, but also prepared for defence. When ^{the} set of angles, were ~~finished~~ completed, ~~where~~ we made signs for them to come and receive some Bottles, which a few did, without their arms; but they were not contented with what was given them, but were rudely seizing every thing they could lay their hands on; and others were perceived following with

with their Arms. We instantly pushed off, with a hope, on my part, of having made a favorable impression. These instances will serve to convey an idea, of the rude state, and ferocious disposition of the Natives, at this place; and of the necessity we were under of being constant-
= ly on our guard

Feb: 1st Being in M: Pherson Strait,
(at the south part of the Great Andaman)
we saw a number of men and women
busy picking up Shellfish on the Reefs;
several of the latter had children on their
backs, suspended in a girth of Bark, painted
red.

red

Feb: 2^d. Six Canoes came off, and shot two Arrows at the Viper's Boat, which was returned, by discharging a pistol; but as the Arrows did no hurt, no further notice was taken of the insult. After paddling about some time, both the Canoes, went alongside the Viper, and parted with all their Bows, Arrows, a piece of Twine, and a fruit resembling Apples, for a few Bottles and Nails.

Feb: 7th. Three Canoes were seen on the shore near us, with a number of the Natives of both sexes. The Men came off in two of the Canoes, and, after a long Speech, (not a word of which was understood) they came on board, and

and bartered their Bows, Arrows, and some fruit,
for Bottles, Knives, and Looking Glasses. The
curiosity of the Women, induced five of them
to come off, in one Canoe. This was the only
instance in which the Women appeared with
a single Leaf to cover their nakedness. They
used their Paddles with dexterity, and amused
us with a dance; but were prevented by
the men from coming so near as they
appeared inclined to have done. The whole
party ^{returned} ~~went~~ onshore a little before dark,
and seemed perfectly pleased.

Febr. 10th Nine canoes came off; six making
boldly for the Elizabeth ~~for the~~ As I judged the number
too great to be admitted on board, a musquet
was fired ahead of the first canoe, which
retarded

retarded its progress very little; but, perceiving they had no Arms, they were permitted to come near the Vessels. They had nothing to barter, except a Turtle, which they would not part with. After giving them ^{presents,} ~~Presents,~~ they made for the Viper. Several went on board, and seized every thing they could lay their hands on. A scuffle ensued; when they shot some Arrows from Bows which had been concealed, and hurt ~~some~~ several of the Crew with Stones. On ^{this} ~~which~~, two muskets were fired at them, which wounded one man, (probably mortally). The poor Wretches immediately desisted from their attack, and paddled towards the shore; bewailing, in a most piteous still.

stile, and supporting the wounded man.

Their very defenceless and rude state, made me regret this accident exceedingly; and, to prevent such in future, it was ordered that no Natives should be permitted to come on board the Viper, and by no means to fire at them, unless pressed by necessity.

At Old Harbour, on the 2^d of March, on passing a point, a number of the Natives, hallowed to us, and made signs to come near; when within about 100 yards, we were saluted by a flight of arrows, which did no hurt; Two or three muskets were fired over their heads, on which,

which, they retired precipitately into the Woods

March 6th. The Viper's Boat having been employed watering during the day, in the evening, when the Party had just left the shore to return on board, about forty of the Natives came down and shot a number of arrows at the Boat, none of which took effect. The following morning, forty seven appeared at the same place, with their Bows and Arrows, probably with an intention of preventing our landing; but, as we were not in want of water, it was unnecessary to put their ^{valour} ~~valour~~ to the test, ^{as they} ~~by which~~ ^{might} ~~they~~ ~~would~~ have fallen victims to their comeliness

temerity and ignorance

+ March 12th Examining the interior of
the Harbour, ^{we} saw several Women fishing
on the Reefs. Pursuing one of the points, a
single man run down to the shore, and shot
his arrows at the Boat; ~~and~~ perceiving he
had but few, I let him expend them all,
only one of which struck the Boat. He
was then reinforced by two women and
a Boy, when they furiously attacked us
with Stones. The women as well as the
men, were perfectly naked; the females
had Strings round their waists, with
~~ornamental~~ ^{ornamental} Tassels ^{pendent} ~~pendent~~ before. One
of the women, ^{who} ~~which~~ was old, when
she

she could not make her stones reach the
 Boat, had recourse to the most indecent
 and lascivious ~~figures~~ ^{gestures} to express her
 rage. As there was no danger to
 be apprehended, and ^{as I wished} ~~wishing~~ to learn
 something characteristic of them, I
 threw a Knife on shore, and made
 signs for the man to pick it up;
^{He did so}
~~which he~~ did, and immediately threw
 down his stones; The women followed
 his example, ^{and} ~~when~~ ^{then} They all came close
 to the Boat; and, from ^{being in} the most virulent
 rage, became ^{unsuspicious} ~~confidential~~ and good na-
 = tured in a moment. The women
 and

and the Boy were complimented with ^{Knives} ~~Knives~~
 and the Man was highly gratified by the
^{present} ~~present~~ of a Hatchet. Those rude savages
 seemed ^{not} ~~far from~~ insensible of our kindness,
^{nor of} ~~and~~ their own improper conduct; for the
 old woman, though solicited, would not
 again exhibit her extraordinary expressions
 of rage. They followed the Boat a considerable
 way, and, when we struck off from the
 shore, sat down on the point, seemingly
 sorrowful at our departure. This ^{interview} ~~interview~~
 induced me to conclude, that it would
 not be difficult, to bring about a friendly
 intercourse; and that they might be
 rendered

rendered useful and happy by proper management

These ~~are~~ ^{were} the principal interviews
with the Natives, during my first survey.
I shall now proceed to ^{relate} other incidents,
which occurred after our little settlement
was formed at Old Harbour; more fully
to develop the character of the Natives

On the 28th of sept: 1789, ^I landed
on a small island (of about seven acres)
situated in old harbour; with two European
Overseers, a Carpenter, a guard of twenty
Sepoys, with Bengal Artificers & Laborers,
to the number of fifty, which was increas-
ed occasionally. The laborious work
of

of clearing the ground, was immediately
 begun; ~~and~~ the Smiths had a temporary
 Forge erected, Charcoal burnt, and ^{by evening,} ~~at work,~~
 sitting and mending Tools. ~~by evening~~
 Several of the Natives were fishing on
 a Reef near the island, and sat down
 opposite us, where they continued several
 hours, without ^{showing} ~~testifying~~ any signs of
 displeasure or hostility

On the following day, the same
 Natives came again, when a Canoe was
 sent to them, with some Bottles, which
 were thankfully received

Oct. 1st At 1 P.M. six of the Natives
 came alongside of the Vessel on two Rafts
 of Bamboo. They expressed no inclination
 to

to come on board, and, after receiving some bottles, they joined a large party which crowded on board the *rafts*, and paddled towards the Island. Two muskets were fired a head of them, which had the desired effect of making them return.

One, bolder than the others swam ~~to~~ to the island; but, on some of our people going to seize him, he jumped into the water, and joined his companions on the opposite side. On this occasion, two two pounders were fired, to show them at what distance we could annoy them. A visit on the island, in the unsettled state ^{then} it ~~was~~ ^{was}, ~~was~~ would have been

been extremely inconvenient

On the 4th When fishing near the place where I had so curious an interview on March 12.th 1788, the same Natives (I believe) came and showed us fresh water, for which they were presented with some Knives

On the 11.th at 10 in the morning, eight of the Natives, on a Bamboo Raft, armed with their Bows, and an unusual number of arrows, passed the Vessel, and paddled towards the island. Though several Musquets were fired ahead of the Raft to deter them, they landed, and began to pilfer the Iron Work from a Boat which was hauled up. ~~I~~ I was then on shore, but a message was sent to inform me ~~being~~ ^{of} the circumstance. I immediately went to ~~there on shore~~ the

(46.)

the place, with two Sepoys, and directed the
Havelkar and two more to follow me. On
two muskets being fired, ^{the natives} ~~they~~ made for
the west point of the island, and took
a position, behind some rocks, (which
covered them) ^{from whence they} ~~and~~ shot their arrows at us
very briskly, until we advanced on them
with Bayonets, when they took to the water,
~~swimming~~ ^{swimming} and diving alternately, without
quitting hold of their Bows and Arrows. A Boat
was ordered after one of the Natives, and it
was a considerable time before he was
caught, so dexterous was he in eluding the
Boat by diving. After ^{he had} ~~having~~ been wounded
through the Nose, and ^{had} lost an eye, by a
pistol ball, he still shot Arrows at his
pursuers

pursuers, from the water. He was soon after
 this taken, when those wounds were disco-
 -vered, ~~and also~~ ^{and also} a cut on the back of
 his head. He was a lad about eighteen
 years of age, five feet four inches high,
 strongly made, well proportioned, and of
 a good ~~open~~ ^{open} countenance; his hair was
 dressed in small tresses, and ~~dressed~~ ^{dressed} with
 the red pomatum. The Boat was ~~then~~ ^{then}
 dispatched after the Raft, which was
 taken, with one Man on it, who made
 no efforts to escape, (it was afterwards
 found that he could not swim;) The other
 six men escaped. The intentions of
 the Natives were evidently to plunder;
 which, considering our circumstances at
 that

(48)

that time, it was absolutely necessary to repress with a degree of rigor, to deter them from further attempts. In this little conflict, one of the Sepoys was wounded in the leg.

The spirit of the young Native did not appear to be ~~at all~~ ^{by} depressed ~~from~~ his misfortunes. He was unwilling to have his wounds dressed, and it became necessary to tie his hands to prevent his tearing them ~~open~~ ^{open}. He drank a little red wine and water, when he was brought on shore, but afterwards refused all sustenance ~~until~~ ^{on that day} until the third day, ~~when~~ we fortunately ^{each of the two} had caught some Mullers; ~~the natives~~ ^{accepted} natives accepted three of them, ~~three each~~, and were conducted to the galley.

galley, where they broiled and eat them. They were soon afterwards brought to eat any of our provisions, but ~~preferred~~ ^{preferred} fat pork to our other articles. The youngest was particularly attentive to the Artificers, and much pleased on first seeing the effects of a File, on a piece of Iron. His wounds very soon healed, and he became ~~reconciled~~ ^{reconciled} to his situation; but appeared extremely backward in communicating his Language, only repeating what was said to him. The other Native appeared to be about the age of twenty seven; but ^{was} far inferior to the young one, in spirit and capacity; ~~and~~ ^{and} ~~he was also~~ ^{was} of a sullen disposition

On

On the 22^d. I was accosted by three women, with the same number of men, near the west shore of the harbour, who were very desirous we should come on shore, but it was thought prudent to decline the invitation, being unprovided for defence. ~~Next~~ On going pretty close in with the Boat, and offering them some knives, the women and one of the men swam off to the Boat, and received them. I made signs that I wanted to drink, when they again beckoned^{us} to come on shore, and pointed to a small rivulet. One of the women was painted in a very fanciful stile, with regular stripes of yellow ochre; and round her

her breasts ^{were} concentric circles of the same color, which had an uncommon and not an ~~unpleasing~~ ^{unpleasing} effect, contrasted with her jet black skin.

Nov. 8. saw several of the Natives, near the east watering place, armed; they shot several arrows at the Boat, one of which wounded a Lascar under the left shoulder, and penetrated ^{full} ~~fully~~ five inches, the point of the arrow appearing behind. The distance from whence this arrow was shot was at least 100 yards: at the time, I judged that the boat was without their reach. On the return of the boat, the two Natives testified

testified much concern for the wounded Lascar, and fomented the wound: This was very satisfactory, being the first ~~deed~~ ^{observed} Trait of tenderness in the Natives. The arrow not being barbed the wound soon healed.

Decr. 5.th The Viper standing pretty close to the east watering place, the same party of Natives which had wounded the Lascar, shot a number of arrows on board; for which they were dispersed, and their Hut burnt.

Decr. 7.th the Viper was dispatched to cruise off Cape Negrais, for Commodore Cornwallis

Cornwallis, in which the eldest of the Natives
 was sent, with an idea, that on being
~~separated~~ ^{separated}, they would be more communi-
 cative, and that we might ~~acquire~~ ^{acquire} a
 little of their language. Lieut. Popper
 had orders, also to touch at Diamond
 X ~~Isle~~ ^{Isle} for Turtle.

Decr. 19.th the Honble. Commodore
 Cornwallis arrived, with His Majesties
 Ships Perseverance and Ariel

Accompanying Commodore Cornwallis
 in his Barge, in which the young
 Native was, we met a group of the
 Inhabitants, near the west watering
 place. They were, as usual, treated with
 civility.

civility; and, by the Lemmings desire,
 they were offered Biscuit, ^{which} ~~which they~~
 as usual, ^{they} made a semblance of
 tasting, but would not eat. On this
 occasion, the young Native (who was
 now dressed, and his head shaved) spoke
 to them, which caused considerable
 surprise, particularly to an old woman.
 He then took off his cap, ^{opened} ~~exposed~~ his
 breast, and put his hand to his wounds,
 which were now perfectly healed, and
 spoke again; ~~when~~ he was immediately
 recognised by the Old Woman ^{from} whose
 Eyes instantly gushed ~~with~~ Tears
 of

of tenderness. The young man, who I
make no doubt was her Son, and
probably given over for lost, was
also most sensibly affected. This scene
would have done honor to the feelings
of the most tender and affectionate
Mother, ⁱⁿ ~~at~~ the most civilized country.

It occurred to me, that it would
have made a most happy impression,
to have ~~releged~~ ^{releged} the young man to
his Mother at this affecting crisis.

After a little explanation amongst
the Natives, they, for the first time,
eat our Biscuit with perfect confidence.

The young Native distributed all the
~~present~~ ^{presents}

~~presents~~ presents he had collected, amongst his Friends, before we ^{quitted} ~~quitted~~ them

A few days after this Interview the young man ^{slipped} ~~slipped~~ off, while on an excursion with the Commodore.

But ~~after~~ ^{after} an absence of a few months, ^{he} ~~the young man~~ returned to our little Island, ^{accompanied by} ~~with~~ his Wife & Friends, with perfect confidence, and continued a friendly intercourse, during the whole period of my residence at Old Harbour.

Some of the Natives were occasionally
carried

carried to Diamond Island, to witness the operation of turning Turtle, and the young man mentioned in the preceding paragraph, was taken a trip to the Carnicobar, where he had Tobacco given him, to barter for coconuts, which he was made to consider as his own property, ^{and} which he carried to his friends ~~when he~~ ^{when he} returned.

April 20.th 1790. On my return from a survey of the north part of the Islands. I was informed by Lieut. Wales, who had been left in charge of the Settlement during my absence, that on the 3.^d we had lost four Fishermen, and ^{that} on the 6.th ~~lost~~ two of their Bodies were found, with evident marks of Barbarity having been exercised in putting them to death. The principal wounds were on the head, and it was observed that their ^{private}

private parts were much torn: The other parts of ^{their} ~~these~~ Bodies, were untouched. This circumstance almost amounts to a proof, that the Natives, though apparently cruel, do not eat human Flesh; for, had it been their practise so to do, some parts of the Bodies would have been carried off. It therefore appears, that the generally received opinion, of the Natives of the ^{Andamans} ~~Andamans~~ being Cannibals, has been adopted without foundation.

The unfortunate Sufferers had been strictly ordered, ~~never~~ ^{not} to fish, except in places where they could see a considerable distance around them, to prevent their being surprised by the Natives.

This melancholy event impressed us with a horrible opinion of the Natives, and made a greater degree of caution ^{necessary.} ~~necessary~~

About

About six months after this, another set of ~~four~~ ^{was} Fishermen ~~were~~ attacked, and wounded; by the Natives. I was apprehensive some offence might have been given; but, after the ~~strictest~~ ^{strictest} enquiry at the time, no evidence appeared to justify my suspicion. ~~Three of this set~~ ^{Three of this set} ~~of~~ Fishermen being desirous to return to Bengal, ~~they~~ ^{to do so;} were permitted, the fourth remained voluntarily; ~~and~~ ^{and} some time the departure of the others, he told ~~after their departure~~, ~~related~~ his companions, that two of those who had been permitted to return, frequently went after the Native Women; and, at the time they were wounded, had committed a rape on one of the Women, and ~~had~~ afterwards ~~had~~ treated her in a most barbarous manner, by pushing a Lance through her thigh, and transfixing her to a tree; ~~and~~ that at this crisis the Men came to her assistance, and attacked them, as has been related.

related. It also ^{now came out,} ~~was~~ ~~te~~ ~~light~~, that the first set, who were murdered, had ^{also} been in the practise of running after the Native Women, which probably was the cause of that catastrophe: their private parts being torn, gives probability to this conjecture

Two young Men, the one about seventeen and the other fourteen years of age, voluntarily accompanied me to Calcutta. They were, upon the whole, less struck with new objects than might have been expected. The Palanqueons fixed their attention and surprise, but nothing afforded them ^{such} ~~an~~ extravagant joy, as when they were put into a carriage drawn by Horses. They were also much delighted

delighted with a Hand Organ

Though both ^{were} at the age of puberty they expressed ^{an} aversion for european Ladies, as well as ^{for} the Women of Bengal; and, when a connexion was hinted at, it was invariably rejected, and the words *Mimie Opie* (an expression for, my country, or my home) ~~were~~ ^{were} uttered in a plaintive tone, and probably ~~alluding~~ ^{alluding} to some tender connexion there.

They remained some time, with the late Colonel Ryd, who endeavoured to have them taught the language of Bengal; but ~~in which~~ they made very little progress in it.

The name of the youngest, was *Uta Baggy you too*; ~~who~~ ^{he was of} ~~had~~ a lively disposition, and

and ^{had a turn} ~~as a turn~~ for ^{mimicking} ~~himself~~. The name of the other, was Titu Hay: ^{he} ~~also~~ was left ~~ob-~~ = servant, and of a phlegmatic temper.

In the month of Novr 1792, a settlement was formed at the N.E. part of the great Indian Bay; and the two Natives, who returned with me, by their own request were sent to Old Harbour. Lieut Hales, who carried them, informed me that they were received by their friends with the most affectionate regard. At this period, Old Harbour was evacuated, ^{but} ~~and~~ a month afterwards I visited the place. On my Boat being perceived, my friends assembled, and run into the water to meet me; ~~where~~ they then recollected ~~as well~~ the English they had acquired, kindly enquired after their friends by name, and put a number of other questions, expressive

of

of regard. I carried the happy group on board with me, men, Women, & Children, gave them a plentiful Dinner, and loaded them with such ~~resents~~ ^{presents} as were most acceptable. On visiting our deserted Village, (which was left standing for the Natives) and the gardens, they officiously selected all the ripe Fruit for me. As my business would not admit of Delay, after recommending an attention to the gardens, which they appeared to understand, I took a Farewell of my Friends.

Having ~~now~~ related what passed in our most ^{particular} ~~characteristic~~ interviews with the Natives, I shall ^{now} briefly notice such of their Manners, Customs, and Arts, as fell within

within our notice

They depend principally on Shellfish
for their ^{subsistence} ~~subsistence~~, which they gather
on the Reefs, and boil in rude earthen
Pots, of their own ^{making} ~~construction~~. The Men
are very dexterous at shooting Fish
with their Arrows; for this purpose, they
wade upon the Reefs about half tide,
and watch for such as come within
their reach. Their fish arrows are in
general barbed, and always buoyant;
by which the fish are easily caught
when wounded: They also catch small
fish in Hand Nets. They carry coarse
Nets in their Juncos, by which they some-
times are fortunate enough to entangle a
Turtle.

Turtle. It appeared that they also procure wild Hogs; the Skeletons of the heads of of those Animals, painted red, having been found in many of their Huts. They also collect a variety of Beans, Fats, and Fruit, the spontaneous produce of the Forests. These are the principal, if not whole articles of their Food.

There was not the smallest trace of cultivation perceived on the Islands

Their most laborious exertions appear to be ~~by~~ the construction of rude Canoes, some of which are large enough to carry ten men. Their only Tools were Adzes, composed of a hard shell, fixed in a piece of crooked wood; resembling those of the South Sea Islanders
Some

Some of their Bows are neatly constructed,
~~which~~ ^{and they} are ~~also~~ occasionally used as Paddles
 for their Canoes. Their Arrows were re-
 = markably neat, considering their awkward
 tools; some were barbed ^{with} a hogs tooth
 fastened near the point; ~~and~~ others ^{were barbed} with
 Iron, ground very sharp

Their Nets were constructed of Thread, made
 of Bark, and very well wrought

The Ornaments worn by both Men
 and Women, are also constructed of a Thread
 made of Bark, ~~specimens of which I take~~
~~the liberty to send as an accompaniment~~

The Inhabitants generally associate
 in Hordes, consisting of from three to
 as many ~~as~~ twenty Families, and migrate
 occasionally

occasionally in their canoes, for fishing, or collecting fruit. Both men and women, at times, daub their skins with mud, probably as a defence against insects, which are sometimes very troublesome.

I cannot speak with certainty but am of opinion that Polygamy, is their practice. The women, though naked, were very chaste.

We were not sufficiently acquainted with their language, to be able to judge with certainty whether they had any notions of Religion, or of a Ruling Power. I ^{remember} ~~seem~~ to have seen, in several of their Huts, a certain part of the Human Skull, carefully ^{wrapped} ~~wrapped~~ up, and seemingly preserved with great care. These are probably

probably ^{kept} ~~kept~~ as Memorials of their departed Friends; which I think has some analogy to the idea of a Future State

Their Language is rather soft, and not unharmonious. I never could discover that they had more than five numeral terms. The word Talie was used to express every thing round; the Sun, the Moon, the Head, a Biscuit were all called Talie. They have, however, distinct terms for the different parts of the Body. Several terms used on the west coast, were not understood by the Natives about Old Harbour.

The mode of Salute, on the east coast, is by lifting the leg, and ~~slapping~~ ^{slapping} the ~~back~~ ^{hind} part

part of the Thigh

The different Hordes appeared to have little intercourse with each other. Those to the south of Old Harbour, had ~~the~~ great Enmity to a ~~Horde~~ ^{Horde} on the north side, and frequently expressed wishes for us to fire at them. A party of ~~either~~ ^{each} were once brought together, which appeared to cause great embarrassment. It was some time before they would converse; and, when they did, it was with the appearance of reserve and distrust.

It has been noticed, as a certain proof of the ferocious disposition of the Natives and affording a suspicion of their being cannibals; that no person has ever
escaped

escaped from any vessel which ^{has} ~~may have~~
 been wrecked on the Andamans. Their
 indiscriminate abhorrence of strangers
 must be admitted, ~~for which~~ ^{the cause of which} I shall
 endeavour to explain;
~~signs of the same. That of their being~~
~~cannibals, I shall not mention~~ ^{and, to shew they are not cannibals}
~~and that they are cannibals shall relate~~
~~to you; besides that, already mentioned,~~
 another fact, besides that
 of the Bodies of two Fishermen, which were
 put to death by them, having been found
 intire. It is ~~a~~ notorious ~~fact~~, that
 many of the Natives have been carried off;
^{of this} I shall only mention recent instances,
 to which I can speak with certainty.
 A Person who had been collecting Birds-
 Nests, informed me that he ^{had} on a former
 voyage,

voyage, ~~was~~ carried off several of the Natives,
 and had presented them to the governor
 of Pomeroon. A french ship/in which
 the Chevalier Boncron was, and whose
 Journal I ^{perused} ~~had the perusal of~~ had a
 conflict with the Natives, in which
 several were wounded, and two were
 carried off, both of whom died, the one
 soon after he was taken, the other at
~~Pondicherry.~~ Pondicherry. Several were brought by
 a french Vessel to Calcutta, and sold
 there. An unsuccessful attempt was made
 by the English Government, to repurchase
 them, with the benevolent intention of
 returning them to their Friends and Native
 country

country. Are not those instances of
Perfidy, (with probably many more
unknown to me) a sufficient apology
for their ferocious enmity to all strangers.

The Master of a small Vessel was left
by his Boats Crew, near our Settlement,
to which the latter found their way, and
told a very disjointed story. Boats were
sent in search of the unfortunate man;
who was found two or three days after,
by Lieut. Propper in the Viper, which
had also been sent on the search. He
was found naked, but unhurt; and
related, that being pressed by hunger,
he had entered some of the Huts, of the
Natives

Natives, where he was going to help himself to their victuals; ~~from~~ ^{upon} which, ^{they} made signs that they would cut his throat. The circumstance of his escaping with his life, is another proof that they are not cannibals; and that their inveterate enmity had in ^{some measure} ~~a degree~~ subsided ^{their}

The very ~~very~~ precarious mode of procuring subsistence, must tend to prevent their increase, and shorten the period of their lives. Ignorant of the advantages of civilized society, they are strongly attached to the savage state.

On their return from a successful fishing party, they appear the happiest of mortals, singing and dancing all the way home to their Huts; which are only miserable
huts

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little Sheds, seldom exceeding five feet in height, and barely sufficient to ^{shelter} ~~shelter~~ them from the heavy rains

From the emaciated state, of ^{most} ~~scarcity~~ of the Children and Old People, it may be presumed that they frequently suffer severely from Hunger

Those in our neighbourhood, at Old Harbour, (as has been related) were at first extremely Hostile; but, by ~~in~~ steady forbearance and occasional acts of kindness, they became strongly attached ^{to us,} and perfectly confident. By carrying them to the adjacent islands, and to Calcutta, and ^{rejoining them} ~~having been~~ safely ~~returned~~ to their friends, they were convinced of our good faith, acquired some idea of Barter, of Cultivation, and of Civilization; ^{which} ~~and it~~ tended to remove those rancorous prejudices to Strangers, and produced that friendly

friendly Disposition which has been noticed

To sum up the character of the Natives, it must be admitted, that they are ferocious and treacherous; but instances have also appeared, of the most tender sensibility and of gratitude. ^{In} justice, therefore ~~is due~~, the former ~~must~~ ^{should} be attributed to the cruel injuries they have received, the latter ^{was} ~~has been~~ called forth ^{by} ~~from~~ a conviction of our pacific intentions.

I had not the means of making a correct estimate of the population of these Islands. But, from having circum-
-navigated the coasts, observed the number of Canoes at the different places, and from their being very few in the interior of the Islands, I ~~have~~ judged that the whole number

number of Natives, probably ~~might~~^{does} not
exceed ~~the number~~ of three Thousand

There ~~are~~^{is} a great variety of soils
on the different parts of the Islands. The
Valleys, in general, are covered with a stratum,
~~of~~ one, ^{foot} or more ~~feet~~ thick, of rich vegetable
mould, with gravel or clay below. Many
of the Hills, though steep, have the same
sort of soil on their surface. There
is a considerable proportion of red gravelly
earth; and there are other parts, of a light
sandy soil

In most parts of the Islands there
is Free Stone; and ^{also} Clay, which was
found to answer well for Bricks and
Pottery

The ~~coral~~^{coral} and Shells on the Reefs
will

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will afford an inexhaustible store of Lime

On the southern parts, particularly
in M. Pherson Strait, the rocks have
a very ~~metalline~~ ^{metallig} appearance: There
is an account of Quick-Silver having
been found ~~on~~ ⁱⁿ the Islands

On our first arrival, we experienced
great ~~inconvenience~~ ^{impediment} to our progress of culti-
-vation, from the heavy rains beating
down the tender plants, as soon as they
appeared above the ground; ~~and~~ ^{also} from Ants
and other insects consuming them. The
Plants which were brought from Calcutta
throve ~~from the beginning~~ ^{immediately}. From the
month of Decr. the violent rains being
over, the vegetables became luxuriant.
Early

+ called Behery in
the West Indies

Early in Jan'y. the gardens afforded a tolerable supply of Turnips, Spinage, ⁺Bandy, and Peasishes. Soon after this, they were sufficiently productive for the whole Settlement, and ^{for} an occasional supply to the King's Ships.

After the first year, we had an abundant supply of the tropical Fruits of quick growth, viz. Plantains, Pappas, Pine Apples, Melons, Pumpkins, Guavas, all of excellent quality; and plenty of all the culinary vegetables of India. Sweet Potatoes, Yams, and the common Potato.

Guinea Grass was remarkably luxuriant, and the ^{Daop} ~~Daop~~ Grass of Bengal which

which is very nutritious for fattle of all kinds, overspread the hills and valleys with little trouble, ~~and~~ ^{though} the whole was propagated from a single root, which, by accident, was placed in one of the boxes with Plants

Successful experiments were made in raising Rice, Barley, Pease, and many sorts of ~~the~~ grain of India

Sugar Canes were luxuriant and full of rich Juice, which, with the Essence of Spruce, made excellent Beer. Pepper Plants were also found to thrive

Black fattle, Sheep, Goats, Hogs, and Poultry, were prolific

By

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By the meteorological Abstract it
will appear, that the Climate is pecu-
liarly equable, and experience proved
that it was healthy, both for european
and asiatic constitutions

An Abstract of a Meteorological Diary, kept at Old Harbour
on the east coast of the Great Andaman from Oct. 1. 1789 to Sep. 30. 1790

Month & year	Thermometer Fahrenheit B. A. M.	Winds Weather &c.
1789 October	72 to 82	Wind moderate from N.E. to S.W. Nearly an equal proportion of Fair and Rainy Weather
Novr.	75 to 84	The first part of this month, the wind and weather, the preceding. The latter part a settled N.E. monsoon with dry serene pleasant weather
Decr.	73 to 80	The two first days, a fresh gale from Eastward, with rain, the remaining part generally serene pleasant weather, with some slight squalls and showers about the 10. th
1790 Janr.	67 to 79	A settled N.E. monsoon, with the attendant land & sea breezes,
Febr.	69 to 78	A settled N.E. monsoon with land & sea breezes. The night of the 7. heavy rain, and light showers the 21.
March	69 to 84	A settled N.E. monsoon with regular land & sea breezes and fair pleasant weather
April	76 to 88	The first part of this month the wind generally from the N.E. quarter, with land & sea breezes to the 15; from this time, the wind was variable, and the weather cloudy, with squalls & rain to the 27. the latter part of the month, the wind generally from southward

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Meteorological Abstract continued

Month & Year	Thermometer Fahrenheit at 6 A.M.	Wind Weather &c.
1790 May	73 to 86	Wind generally from SW, sometimes varying to all the other quarters. Some slight Showers generally cloudy, and frequently Thunder & Lightning.
June	78 to 84	Wind generally from SW. The first seven days generally Fair, with some slight squalls & Showers. From the 7 to the 17. frequent hard Squalls attended with Thunder Lightning & Rain. The latter part of this month cloudy with clear intervals, and a considerable proportion of Fair weather.
July	76 to 81	A settled SW Monsoon. To the 6. Slight Showers, Wind moderate. To the 11. Heavy Rain with little intermission. To the 15 generally Fair in the days with Rain in the nights. To the 25. a quick succession of hard Squalls, with heavy Rain, from the 25. to the end of the month Squalls & Showers with fair intervals.
August	79 to 82	The wind generally from SW, with fair and rainy weather alternately. The Squalls less violent and not so frequent as last month.
Sept.	75 to 81	Wind generally from SW varying to NW moderate; Rainy and Fair Weather in nearly equal portions Clear

Sketch
of the
Andaman Islands

